

## POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

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## Start Right and Go Slow.

The same old question of the possible and probable profits of the poultry business keeps coming up. A reader of the Feather asked it and received the following answer from the editor:

I would like to have some information regarding poultry raising, and, being a reader of your paper, take the liberty of asking your advice. My mother has some money to invest in some business, which must pay her an income. She would like to invest in a small poultry plant, if certain that this would give us good returns. Not being familiar with poultry raising we would like to have advice. Would you suggest raising poultry for market or eggs for market, or both? How much money would be necessary, and how much land would it take for raising both poultry and the feed for the same? The sum named being all that we have to invest, would you consider it enough for us to embark in the business?

And the Feather makes this reply:

This is a question quite difficult to answer. We could not advise any one to go into the poultry business as a means of making a living who did not understand something about caring for poultry. It is quite as necessary to be familiar with the poultry business to succeed as it is to be acquainted with any business to prosper in it. If you can have a small piece of land, say four or five acres, we would advise starting in a small way, with not over one hundred hens, and grow slowly into the proper management of same for profit. Poultry, fruit, bees and squabs would be a much better combination to grow upon such a plant than to attempt to grow the feed for the poultry and raise poultry as well. Above all things we would advise you to visit one or two successful poultry plants and see what they are doing and how they are conducted before you attempt to go into the business yourself. Start right, have some necessary experience and go slow, and you will surely succeed. But if you jump into more than you can manage at first you are likely to fail.

## Experiments in Flavoring the Eggs.

Eggs are one product of the farm that never improve with age and should not be kept any longer than is necessary. But while they are on hand they should be carefully protected from all strong odors. Whether they can be affected by the food eaten or not they do very easily absorb odors from their surroundings. As to the question of feed changing the flavor of eggs the American Poultry Journal says:

While the composition of eggs is but little influenced by the rations fed, marked changes in flavor can be brought about by feeding. At the North Carolina station chopped wild onion bulbs and tops were fed to laying hens at the rate of one-half ounce per hen daily. It was fifteen days before the flavor of the onions could be distinctly noticed in the eggs. After that an ounce of the mixture was fed to the hens for four days and then omitted entirely. During this period the eggs were flavored so strongly of onions that they could not be eaten. Onion flavor could be detected in some of the eggs seven days after the feeding of onions had been stopped.

The New York State station notes one experiment in which hens fed a ration of wheat shorts, cotton seed meal and skim milk, produced eggs having a very disagreeable flavor and smell and failed to keep well. When cabbage instead of clover was fed green to the hens at the Massachusetts station the flavor of the cabbage eggs was thought to be inferior. Sev-

eral stations note the smaller number, but remarkably fine color and quality of eggs produced by hens on a corn ration.

Very recently the West Virginia station reports the results of experiments in which celery oil, sassafras oil and trimethylamine, respectively, were fed to laying hens, but without any noticeable effect whatever on the flavor of the eggs produced. The color of the yolk of the egg, on the other hand, was found to be easily influenced by the ration fed. Wheat, oats, or white corn fed alone or in combination uniformly produced very light colored eggs. The feeding of yellow corn on the other hand gave eggs with rich yellow yolks.

All these results considered together, indicate that flavor may be fed into eggs, and this point should be taken into consideration in preparing ration for laying hens. In building up a fancy trade in eggs, it is very desirable that they have rich yellow yolks, and with proper attention to the rations this may be secured.

## Not All in the Hatch.

Probably some of you have already found out that it is not all in the hatch. Almost any make of incubator will, if carefully managed, hatch a good percentage of eggs, but the raising of them is not always so easy as it appears to be. A writer, in Commercial Poultry, gives some incidents that illustrate this truth:

How many chickens we can hatch is not so important a question as how many we can raise. If we hatch a thousand they will do us no good unless we can raise them to market size. If we hatch three hundred and raise all of them we are on the highroad to prosperity. Early last spring a poultry-loving friend wrote me that she had hatched over five hundred chickens, and she was in high spirits over her prospects and said something about a summer trip to Colorado. About three weeks ago I wrote her asking about that trip. In reply she emptied the vials of her wrath and indignation.

"I've had the infernal luck this year I ever had," she wrote, "and that Colorado trip has gone glimmering. If I had followed your advice, I am now convinced it would have materialized. The rats and the storms laid my chickens out in swaths, and now I'm like any other old farmer's wife—selling a little dab now and then to the chicken wagon."

I had advised her to spend about thirty dollars in improvements, and get into chicken raising shape before she got out the chickens. Like thousands of others, she declared it would be a waste of money. I said, fence in a yard and keep your chickens safe from storms, cats, bird-dogs and hawks. Make your coops rat-proof, and make plenty of them, so the chicks won't be crowded, and shut the doors every night, and sell the birds just when the profit to you will be the largest. I told her exactly how to do these things and when to do them, but she thought my advice was all twaddle and went on in "the usual way" and lost out. Now she is prepared for next year's campaign, and there will be a different tale to tell at that ranch. And this reminds me that now is the time to prepare for the work of next season. The party who puts off until spring will find himself in the same hole he now is. I've heard lots of people say, "I shall fix things different around here next spring," and I knew when I heard them say it that things would be exactly as they now are. But when I heard a man say a few days ago that he had bought the stuff and was going to fix things next week, I knew they would be fixed. What's the use of hatching chickens, anyway, unless you raise them to market size and get the cash into your pocket?

In the spring of 1904 a young man wrote me that he was in the poultry business for wealth, and that he had just taken 166 chickens out of one machine and had another the same size nearly ready to shell out. He went

on at great length telling me how he was going to manage them and how much he calculated to make out of them. After he had told me all of his plans and explained his methods in full, he said: "I'm satisfied I'm on the right track, and that this is a sure go. What do you think?" I simply wrote him to wait until all those chickens were five weeks old and then to write me and say how many he had. I did not think he would write, but he did. He wrote: "I have just 27 of that first lot of chickens alive, and I have just taken out 254 more, and I hope to have better luck with them, but I fear they will get the cholera like the others did and all die off. If this batch does no better than the other, I'm out of it for good." He asked for no advice, and I ventured none, but I soon afterwards heard he was "out for good." He was a good mechanic and engineer and he could manage machinery all right, but he was not in it when it came to managing living things. He failed because he tried to manage his chickens as he did machinery. He fed them the same as he would oil a machine, and ran his brooders strictly according to "directions," as he understood them. His wife, a little thing who knew nothing at all about machinery, took his hens, 22 nice ones, and following the directions of a kind, motherly neighbor, raised nearly forty dollars' worth of chickens. This year she has 35 hens and has sold about fifty dollars' worth of eggs and chickens, and will probably make it \$80 before winter. She is so quiet about it that one would scarcely know that she knew what a chicken is. But she manages to get first-rate hatches, and, what is better, to raise to selling size very nearly every chick she hatches.

She keeps her chicks yarded as I have so constantly advised, and when she retires at night she knows that every chick is in a good coop and entirely safe from storms and all prowling things. She has learned that the first two weeks of a chicken's life is the critical period, and that at this time it must be fed very much as wild birds feed their young, a very little at a time, easily digested food with enough variety in it to build them up—all over, not in flesh at the expense of bone, nor bone at the expense of flesh but all together, symmetrically. Then she has learned what many a fancier has yet to learn, that to make a perfect fowl the bird must have food that will develop all its parts, bone, flesh and feathers, equally; also that a healthy chick and fowl will balance its own ration if it is provided with the material from which to get what its system craves. This is why she has succeeded where her husband failed; why she has made money from a few hens alone where he failed with both hens and machinery. It is knowledge of this sort that makes the successful poultryman, the one who stays in the business year after year and makes money.

## A Hen Story from Across the Border.

The Toronto Globe is responsible for the following remarkable tale of the eccentricities of a hen. It says:

Town Assessor W. A. Grosecup of Clyde has come forward with the champion hen story.

He says that he has a hen which buries her eggs. She does not lay twice in the same place as other hens do as a matter of course, but deposits her eggs in the most unexpected places, covering the egg each time with earth. Some have been hoed out of the garden and others dragged to the surface by the harrow. One of the eggs was laid in a heap of sand on the south side of the house some weeks ago and yesterday a little chicken popped out of the heap, having been hatched by the heat of the sun.

Mr. Grosecup says he expects that later when the ground gets thoroughly warm little chickens will come popping up out of the ground all over his farm.

Mr. Grosecup has always borne the reputation of being an exceptionally truthful man.



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## Too Grasping.

We hope that none of our readers are so "Penny wise and pound foolish," as the farmer described by the Missouri Valley Farmer:

We were talking with a neighbor the other day about buying eggs of thoroughbred chickens, and he gave us a little incident that shows there are some men who do not keep thoroughbred stock that want a pretty fair price for their eggs. It seems that our friend has been admiring some white chickens that a farmer had who lives several miles away from this pleasant valley, so one day as he was driving past he stopped and asked if they would sell him a few settings. He was informed that "the old man" had just gone to town with all the eggs they had on the place, and that if he would drive along a little he would probably overtake the white chicken man. He did so, and what do you think this man wanted for his white hen eggs, and they were not thoroughbred stock either? He wanted 50 cents a dozen and refused to sell for less. Our friend didn't invest, so the eggs were taken into town and sold for 10 cents a dozen. Would you expect a farmer of this stamp to go into any combination of farmers calculated to help the farmers of a community?

## Eggs of Amazing Proportions.

Many people in this country have seen ostrich eggs, which usually average about equal to two dozen hen's eggs. But an egg equal in size to six ostrich eggs would surely be a curiosity.

The following account is from the Southern Poultry Courier:

An egg 12 inches long and 10 inches in diameter with a shell nearly one-quarter of an inch thick will be exhibited among the treasures of natural history by the government at the World's Fair. It is an egg of the apyornis and was recently purchased by Dr. E. W. True, of the Smithsonian Institute. Specimens of these eggs are very rare, having sold in London as high as \$1,000. Compared with other eggs some idea of its immensity may be had. It will hold the contents of six ostrich eggs, or 148 hen's eggs, or 30,000 humming birds' eggs. Little is known of the birds from which these eggs come. Most of the eggs are found in the sands and swamps in the southern part of Madagascar. One specimen was found afloat on the ocean, after a hurricane, bobbing serenely up and down with the waves.

## Millet Seed.

Millet grows well in Florida. Besides being good for hens, it is excellent feed for young chicks. Better grow a small patch and try the experiments. The following is from Commercial Poultry:

Millet seed is relished by the hens, and unless given too freely is one of the best egg producers. A good way to feed it is to throw the unthreshed straw in the shed and let the hens scratch for the seed—but too much must not be given. Millet is almost as fattening as corn, but since the seed is so small, there is less danger from feeding it. If corn is given to the hens before being shelled, they will work over it, getting a grain at a time, and so far apart that the danger of overfeeding is much less. Cowpeas are highly relished by hens, but, like millet and corn, must be fed with care. All kinds of sound grain are good for hens—and if we exercise care in feeding we will get good results from them.